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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS
EXECUTIVE

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Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan
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8701 W. Vernor, Ste. 102
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March 1, 2013
Meeting Minutes No. 288

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Acting Chairperson Gil Guevara called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Commissioners Present: Gilberto Guevara, Norma Huizar, Jesse Venegas, Raquel Castaneda-Lopez, Noel Garcia, Jr., Melissa Fernandez, Carlos Sanchez,

Excused Absence: Olga Hernandez-Patino, Gil Guzman, David Acevedo, Maria Oxholm, George Fierro, JoAnn Chavez, Carlos Alvarado, Julio Morales

Staff Present: Marylou Mason, Victoria Garcia-Martin

II. Introduction of Commissioners

Acting Chairman Guevara asked Commissioners and staff to introduce themselves. Ms. Mary McLellan, Commission Liaison was also in attendance

III. Welcoming Remarks

Acting Chairman Gil Guevara thanked the community for coming to the meeting.

IV. Approval of Absences: Commissioners absent: Olga Hernandez-Patino-out of state, George Fierro-out of state, Carlos Alvarado-out of state, Maria Oxholm-work commitment, Julio Morales-work commitment, Gil Guzman-funeral, JoAnn Chavez-work commitment, David Acevedo-family commitment. No Motion due to lack of quorum.

V. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: No Motion due to lack of quorum.

VI. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: No Motion due to lack of quorum.

VII. MDCR Commission Liaison, Mary McLellan: Ms. McLellan announced she is the Commission's liaison within the Dept. of Civil Rights. The Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan is located within the Dept. of Civil Rights, as well as the Asian Pacific American Commission and the Commission on Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The Arab Chaldean Commission is dormant right now but should be up and running in the next month or so. She stated she was happy we were meeting in the Detroit area. She added that most of the audience speaks Spanish and she said she could only say "Hola". She stated the same was true with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community, they all use sign language and she doesn't know sign language except how to sign "Hi". She also added she doesn't know any Asian languages as well. Ms. McLellan said this job is one of the best she has ever had. Her background is horticulture and people wonder how she once worked with plants and now works with the Department of Civil Rights. She stated her response to people was when you are planting a landscape; you really need diversity in the landscape because if you plant just one type of plant, they will not thrive. That is what happened to the Elm trees. When they got diseased, it wiped them all out. If we don't have diversity in cultures, this would be a horrible place to live. She is very pleased she is getting to know more about the Hispanic community and the Asian community. A lot of people don't have that opportunity and that is what is missing in our state and country.

On behalf of the Department and the Governor's Office, Ms. McLellan thanked the Commissioners for their service on the Commission. She stated when the Governor's Office chooses people to serve on these Commissions; rarely do they pick individuals who are bored. It is usually individuals who are extremely busy people. She understands the Commissioner absences. She stated the work the Commission does is extremely important and the reason she wanted to come and talk to the Commission was about immigration. This is a huge issue and has been but finally on the national level it's not just about undocumented workers. It's about immigration for all people all over the world. This is a global economy. If Michigan is going to thrive, survive and have any sustainability, if don't open our doors, minds, and hearts to international people, people who were not born in this country, people who may have been born in this country but look different than her. She stated she is probably the typical white person with Scottish background. She stated she does not stick out. She is totally invisible. She stated that most of the people sitting in this room have a little darker skin, but that doesn't mean you are different. People automatically have all of the horrible stereotypes.

She added if you are Asian, your eyes might look different if that is a stereotype. Immigration is huge. We must all be welcoming to all people that come to this state. Michigan is a huge state for refugees to come to. Refugees are people that leave their home country because if they stay, they are probably going to die. She stated she appreciates the work this Commission does. The Governor wants to be known as the most immigration friendly governor in the United States. There are some issues that he can't do anything about. She is pleased to say that the Secretary of State finally was convinced that the DACA people deserve driver's licenses so we are moving along slowly but surely. She asked the Commission that as they go about their work this year, could they please help the department and community to see to what we can do to be on the front lines of the immigration issue. All cultures need to be open to other culture. She stated she asked the Asian Pacific Commission and Marylou, is to have the Asian Pacific Commissioners and Hispanic/Latino Commission come together to hold immigration summit. She stated because she liaison for all the ethnic commissions, she would like to see everybody come together and see the audience full of black, white, brown, pink, and purple. She also added to include the people that look like her, who don't even have a clue. They will come and meet and understand that basically we are all the same. She stated she feels immigration is here to stay.

She stated she is from a Republican family background but doesn't like to call herself a Republican anymore. She stated good or bad, the Republicans seem to be opening their minds a little. She asked that the Commission keep their focus on immigration but also to think of what we all can do collectively. How can the Hispanic/Latino Commission reach out to the Asians, the Bangladeshi.

Ms. McLellan announced to Commissioners that she was going to set up a meeting to either call them because she wants to know they as people, what are their passions, what are their backgrounds, etc.

She announced this year is the Dept. of Civil Right's 50th Anniversary. The initial plan was to do 50 cities in 50 days but she said that wasn't going to happen. That is a lot of bus driving. The anniversary starts in March 2013 and runs through the middle of 2014. Lee Gonzales is working on the launch which is going to be in Detroit on March 13th. There will be all sorts of activities in various cities around the state and the department may call on the Commission to help advertise it to their communities.

Acting Chairman Guevara thanks Ms. McLellan for coming and her for address. He stated that he has no doubt that HLCOM will be able

to reach out to a number of people in our community, get them organized and get them politically involved. He advised that once Ms. McLellan makes contact with each of the Commissioners that she comes to their community vs over the phone so they can take her around the community, visit organizations, and meet people that are very involved.

In regard to the 50th anniversary, of course the Commission will assist whenever possible.

Mr. Jordi Carbonell stated that as we know deferred action applicants are being accepted and there are 400,000 total applicants. One of the major groups is Hispanic/Latinos but another part of the group is Asian Pacific Islanders. It is another big group that is impacted by this executive order. Any partnership to understand the issues that their dealing with is at the APAC Commission would be very beneficial.

Ms. McLellan thanked the Chair for the suggestion she visit their communities and she will absolutely do that and see the communities.

Public Forum

Mary Turner, staff from Rep. Rashida Tlaib's office: Ms. Turner stated Rep. Tlaib sends her well wishes and wanted to be in attendance but her schedule didn't allow it. She offered her assistance to the Commission. Ms. Turner handed out flyers announcing her office is offering free income tax preparation. Immigration is an issue that is very near and dear to Rashida's heart so their office will assist where they can.

Mr. Jose Cuellar, Wayne State University: Mr. Cuellar stated he would like to hear committee reports before he gives public comment.

Maria Elena Rodriguez, Community Advocate and Former Commissioner: Ms. Rodriguez stated she appreciates Ms. McLellan's comments but the Hispanic community is very diverse, not only are we Hispanics but we have African roots, Asian roots, Arab roots who make up who we are and that goes for the rest of Latin America. We come in every shade and are hair is everything from platinum blond to black. It's a culture it's not how we appear physically. There is a lot of work to be done and information we can share with you and everyone because of the big misconceptions. In regard to us joining forces, the community in SW Detroit has worked very closely with the Arab community for a very long time and working with the Asian Pacific Islander would be a natural process.

Ms. McLellan commented following Ms. Rodriguez's statement. She stated she apologized to the community because she feels as she has offended the community and she is devastated. She stated she has a deep passion for the work that she does and if she came across as someone who is ignorant, she feels humiliated and she apologizes. She stated she is neither Hispanic nor Asian and she doesn't understand and that's where the misunderstanding lies. She came to the meeting with open arms but she doesn't feel how she came across to the community.

Ms. Rodriguez stated she wasn't asking for an apology but wanted to clarify that the Hispanic community is very diverse. We would be more than happy to share the Hispanic culture with her so she would have a better insight. She stated not everyone in the room is Mexican.

Miguel Lugo, American GI Forum: He stated he is an American citizen and a former farmworker. Hispanics have to protect ourselves because we are always being discriminated against because of misconceptions.

Aaron Barndollar, director of Compas: Mr. Barndollar welcomed the Commission to the Center. He stated he is lucky to have worked at the Arab American Museum for the 6 years and now he works here at Compas. He said they lost a great program at the Michigan Roundtable. This starts with the youth. We are struggling to get the resources that we need just to keep organizations like this open. He is welcome to working with the Commission and always open to more resources to help more students.

Lee Gonzales, Dept. of Civil Rights: Mr. Lee Gonzales thanked the Commission for coming to Detroit. He stated he currently works for the MI Department of Civil Rights and is involved with the Anti-bullying initiative, Community Relations, Police and Community, Profiling after 911, Global Michigan, and the Cultural Ambassadors program. He stated is a former state representative. He stated he was happy to see that immigration reform is moving forward in Michigan. Other states are ahead of Michigan: California, Washington, Illinois, and a few others. He said Michigan has to put together an action plan.

The most recent Michigan report on international trade, dated February 2013, showed exports was almost 57 billion dollars (~25 billion from Canada, 10.5 billion to Mexico). Our trade to Mexico increases every year. Mexico is our 3rd largest agricultural export. He stated back in 2005 he worked with Marylou and Mexican Consul Antonio Meza on bi-partisan trade relations where a delegate of legislators traveled to Mexico City, Mexico and met with Mexican legislators. Discussions included relations and exports. This was a very successful trip. He would like to see another trip scheduled back to Mexico with a new delegation of legislators.

Sandra Gonzales, Professor at Wayne State University, College of Education: Ms. Gonzales stated that in 2011 the state of Michigan cut the funding for bilingual education. Wayne State University is one of the last universities to offer bilingual

certification for teachers. They have seen the bilingual pipeline numbers dwindling. She has seen a decrease in number of Latino teachers coming through their program. In the ESL model, the philosophy is very different from the bilingual education model. In bilingual education it's a program designed to embrace the importance of diversity and having a second language. This is a very needed program and Michigan is now behind several other states. She encouraged the Commission to advocate on the behalf of bilingual education to get the funding reinstated.

Commissioner Garcia made the recommendation that the Education Committee invite Ms. Gonzales on a conference call to discuss a possible bilingual education statement on behalf of the Commission.

Ethriann Brammer, Associate Director for the Center of Latino American Studies: He -announced the 2013 Equity Conference, April 7-9, Detroit. This is the first time this conference has ever been hosted by Wayne State University or the city of Detroit. One of the speakers is world famous president of the University of Maryland in Baltimore, Freeman Robowski who has done amazing work in the diversification of higher education, especially in addressing minority and stem fields and promoting high education for diverse communities with an extreme amount of success. Another speaker is Alfonso Venezuela from University of Texas-Austin. The conference is free.

Ann Latarte, Southwest Detroit Lighthouse: Her school is trying desperately to find bilingual teachers and agreed with other guest to support the recovery of bilingual education funds.

Mary Turner: Ms. Turner asked the Commission if they were aware the Ambassador Bridge wants to pass trucks with chemicals. They are looking for people to speak against this practice.

Commissioner Casteneda-Lopez invited this guest, as well as Michelle, Ethriam and Sandra, to participate on our monthly conference call scheduled the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 12:00noon discuss these health and education issues and how we can perhaps schedule a meeting with the Governor or issues a statement.

Rosa Morales, Journalist: Ms. Morales stated she was representing the National Association of Hispanic Journalist. This association has a very important presence in this country. Michigan is going to become a chapter of the association. The mission (Get statement from Rosa)

Ozzie Rivera, Community Engagement for Southwest Solutions: Mr. Rivera said through the actions Latin American Studies they will be hosting Academia del Pueblo. Juan Gonzales, who is one of the leading and renown authors, will be speaking. This is an effort to promote leadership at the college level. The event date is April 20, 2013 and the event is free.

Latinos have played a leading role in multiracial work around in response to this. Some of the best organizers in the metro areas have been Latinos and this includes public and charter schools.

Mr. Cuellar, Wayne State University: Mr. Cuellar thanked the Commission for the past 38 yrs of service to the Community. The Commission is best known for advocacy day, Hispanic Heritage Month, and recognition of leaders. The role of the Commission is to develop policy and recommendations to the legislature and Governor. He inquired how many of these policy recommendations actually get to the Governor. How many times of year does this Commission send policy recommendations? In the last 38 years, has the commission documented any of the policy recommendations that were accepted and had an impact or have seen the effects on the community? Mr. Cuellar stated without this documentation and this type of action, this is really just a token Commission. He said he doesn't see the Governor doing anything for Hispanics, i.e. his position with the driver's license, the dream act. He stated the Commission is appointed by the Governor but the Commission needs to serve the Hispanic community. The Governor should be number two on the agenda, not number one. He said if we can't do that then give the community how they can work with the Commission to make the Commission more powerful. They could demonstrate at the capital to try and get more direct influence for the Commission.

Mr. Cuellar then apologized to liaison Ms. Mary McLellan but indicated this Commission needs someone in this position who already is well versed in multicultural affairs; not someone who comes from agriculture and he said he thought she should resign or get fired. He stated we need don't need someone that needs on the job training. I think her comments were very racist. They need someone who is capable of doing the job.

Acting Chairman Guevera stated the Commission has been in existence for the past 38 years. He can't speak for the 38 years nor highlight the 38 years but has been on the Commission for two years and all Commissioners are volunteers. Commissioners have to take time from their regular lives to help the Hispanic Community. In regards to meetings with the Governor, he also is waiting to meet with Governor Snyder. It doesn't mean it cannot happen; it can happen. He believes this Commission can make it happen.

Mr. Lee Gonzales stated that he thought the comments that Mr. Cuellar made were pretty harsh. He stated that he has worked with Ms. McLellan on many projects including the Cultural Ambassadors Program, she has accompanied the director of civil rights to meet with the Governor's executive office staff, as well as staff from other state departments. We are trying to make Michigan the most anti-racist and immigrant friendly state in the nation.

Female guest, Michigan State University Extension Service: She addressed the commission on the budget cuts her office has experienced. They are limited not on the work that they do. They are trying to reach out to the Latino community due to high rate of obesity. She is there to advocate from MSU Extension Service Program.

Jordi Carbonel: Mr. Carbonel introduced himself and state he donated the coffee today.

Ms. Lupe Guevara: Ms. Guevara stated she was Gil Guevara's wife. She stated she didn't see our Governor as being Hispanic friendly because she was raised here. She is Hispanic and she loves her culture and community and Hispanics have never had so many problems as we have since the Governor's election. If Governor Snyder wants Hispanics to support him, then why is he making so many problems for us? He has been cutting so many programs that are hurting so many people. He has been cutting the budgets from many of the programs that Hispanics use and it is hurting the people. These cuts are not only hurting Hispanics but all people that are low income/poor.

Ozzie Rodriguez, Private Citizen: He stated even though our Governor seems to try and show real support for immigration reform, there are members of his party who are saying any form of immigration reform will include LGBT individuals that that will be a deal breaker. He stated he hopes that the Governor will say no to something like that. He stated he hopes he understand that as Latinos or Mexican Americans we are concerned about the earned income tax credit and how it doesn't exist anymore, we are concerned about getting an increased minimum wage and how if we don't get it the impact it would have.

Male guest: If politics that deals with the farmworkers from Mexico is unreal, what is happening is those workers? They are not coming here to produce the goods and this is destroying our economy. This country has 30 million immigrants, social security would be gone already. These individuals work and their benefits and money are taken from them. That's what builds our social security program. They can never collect social security because of their immigrant status. His concern is what this is doing to the countries that they come from. He said he doesn't buy anything they try to sell to him.

Mariana Garcia, Freelance reporter: She used to work for not for profit media-based agency as their only Latina correspondent. Unfortunately they lost funding in Detroit that is why she is participate in activities like Dia de la Mujer, De los Libros and others.

Tia Michelle Gonzales, child: She told the Commission she was glad they were at the meeting.

Acting Chairman Guevara thanked the community for all the comments and said they would try to put in prospective committees so they can take a look at them and

more forward. He said he heard an array of issues and he believes its important for the Commission to try and deal with some of the issues.

VIII. Executive Reports

A. Chairperson's Report:

Acting Chairman Guevara stated there was no report in Chairman Guzman's absence.

B. Executive Director's Report:

Director Mason stated Commissioners have had the opportunity to review her report and she entertained any questions they may have.

Director Mason stated recently attended the US Hispanic Leadership Institute Annual Conference. There were over 7000 college students in attendance. In the packet, there several copies of the conference attachments announcing speakers and workshops that were held. Ms. Mason stated there were 75 students from the University of Nebraska. These students were able to attend because they worked all year to fundraise to earn enough money for them all to attend. While these students were fundraising throughout the year, these students attended a leadership program and at the conference they were presented with their certificates of completion. Ms. Mason stated if the students in Nebraska can do it, then the students here in Michigan can too. She stated the staff of the USHLI will come to Michigan and work with the students and train them as well.

In the past, the Commission has held a student summit during Hispanic Heritage Month. We have held it at the state capital to give students exposure to the state capital and legislators. We invite the Governor and his staff, all the legislators and their staff and the community to have a cultural lunch on the lawn. There are so many students that have not attended because of school finances; Lansing is too far, etc. Other states have found other ways to hold a student summit such as have summits in various cities. The USHLI will come to your state and assist you in holding the summit and provide the workshops. The state of Utah divided the state into different areas and held the summit in those areas; eg, Holland, Detroit, Grand Rapid, Saginaw. We can still have our student summit in Lansing but get more of the students in Lansing to attend. We also had a very successful college fair this year. Since the event was held at the Ramada Inn, the college fair was held in one of the conference rooms and students were much more focused and gained more knowledge about college without all the distractions of the capital lawn and luncheon. Ms. Mason will share and discuss more of this information with the Education Committee to see how we can better serve the Hispanic students in the state of Michigan.

Ms. Mason spoke regarding the comments that Mr. Lee Gonzales made about the legislative exchange with Mexico. That exchange was done because we need to build bridges with congressional people and our legislators. Our legislative body is a lot different than the legislative body in Mexico. We started here in Michigan because we have a larger percentage of Mexican American. The legislative body in Mexico has inquired about continuing the legislative exchange. Ms. Mason stated she has discussed the issue with Senator Roger Kahn and he is very interested in the exchange. This exchange also ties into Global Michigan which the Governor is very supportive of. She said Governor Snyder wants to make Michigan a much friendlier state so that everyone will feel welcome. Global Michigan initiative is not just for the Commission, it is for everybody and to better our community. We cannot do the work alone, we need everybody's help.

Acting Chairman Guevera stated that Ms. Mason attends a number of immigration conferences/meeting and wanted to know how the Commission can bring a statement to not only our congressional leaders but our state legislators.

Ms. Mason stated the Asian Pacific Commission is interested in holding an immigration forum for both Commissions to sponsor. They would like to hold the forum in the Detroit area and asked us to assist in finding a location and identify a few speakers. The location needs to be where the Asian community and the Hispanic community can meet to have the forum. We have a few Hispanic Immigration attorneys in mind. The forum should have 6-7 speakers. A date needs to be determined in possibly early April. Ms. Mason asked the Detroit Commissioners to assist her in finding a location that will hold a lot of people.

Acting Chairman Guevara asked if the Governor would be invited to the immigration forum so he knows how the community is affected. Ms. Mason said the Governor would be invited.

Ms. Mason stated the entire Commission will be asked to work on the forum and a conference call will be scheduled with the Asian Pacific Commissioners.

Ms. Mason stated in response to previous question about meetings with the Governor, the Commission has always met with the Governor in office. All of the governors have been supportive of what we do but some have help more than others. We will be working on having a meeting with Governor Snyder and we will be taking all the issues we have about budget cuts, immigration, etc.

A guest asked how our meetings are promoted. He said he found out about our meeting by accident through a co-worker. Ms. Mason stated our communications office sends out statewide press releases to all the media outlets. Also, our office has a large data base of individuals and organizations and a meeting notice is sent via email. Detroit area commissioners also sent notices via Facebook invitations.

Mr. Lee Gonzales announced the 3rd Annual Law Symposium by the University of Detroit Mercy, March 8, 2013 at the Detroit Athletic Club. Immigration law and policy are will topics that will be discussed. There are many speakers and workshops scheduled. Governor Rick Snyder will deliver the keynote address.

IX. Committee Reports:

- A. Economic Development/Agriculture: No report.
- B. Education/Health: Commission Castaneda-Lopez reported that the committee recently held a conference call. The committee did commit to attend at least 3 community education/health events throughout the state of Michigan to assist Ms. Mason in her efforts to reach out to the community. Advocacy Day and the Hispanic Education Summit were discussed as well as different ideas to improve the event and increase attendance. Discussion included inviting representative from ALSAME and MI College Access Network to discuss possibly partner with them to have a stronger Summit. Conference calls are held monthly on the 2nd Tuesday at 12:00noon. She extended an invitation to those individuals in the audience that have expressed educational concerns to participate on a future conference call.
- C. Legislative & Civic Engagement: Commissioner Castaneda-Lopez reported that this committee met by conference call. Discussion included Advocacy Day, a meeting with all of the state legislators, preparing an action plan and then Commissioners meeting with their respective representative individually, as well scheduling a meeting for the entire Commission to meet with the Governor. The next meeting the committee will discuss Advocacy Day more in depth. Commissioner Castaneda-Lopez offered for those guests in attendance with concerns that they are welcome to participate on the next conference call.

X. Old Business:

- A. Executive Director Mason handed out padfolios to all Commissioners. The padfolios have Commissioners names on them and have the Commission logo embossed on it.


B.

XI. New Business:

- 1) Immigration Forum partnership with Asian Pacific Islander Commission-Previously discussed in the meeting.

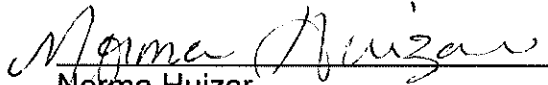
- 2) A cake was presented to Ms. Mary McLellan for her birthday.
- 3) Next meeting, May 3, 2013 @ 10:00am, Holland, Grand Valley State University. Hosted by Commissioner Sanchez

Prepared by Commission staff:



Gil Guevarra
Acting Chairperson

Date



Norma Huizar
Secretary

Date